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ABSTRACT

People working together on community projects benefit both themselves and the community. Quality Circles (Theory Z) is an example of this principle at work in industry. Employees who are involved in the decision-making process turn out a lower-cost, higher-quality product. This concept could prove valuable in small schools if students were permitted to participate in community development activities. There are many community development programs which are effective. One example is the Building Our American Communities (BOAC) program of the Future Farmers of America. In this program, students nominate projects from which to choose, appoint committees to study their possible success, and through consensus select one to work on. If these steps are followed, a successful outcome is assured which will benefit the students, the school, and the community. (DC)

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SMALL SCHOOLS

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Community Development in Small Schools

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People working together on community development projects have a desirable effect both on the individuals and the community involved. Government agencies recommend advisory councils to help direct their programs, and include people in decision-making which are affected by the governmental agency program. Worker involvement in industrial decision making is increasing at a rapid rate. Occupational psychologists are recommending worker involvement in industry through the formation of groups called "Quality Circles."

"Quality Circles" are sometimes referred as Theory Z, with Theory X, a psychological theory which states that the worker is lazy and must be made to work. Theory Y is the theory which states that workers should be satisfied, and that the employer should make efforts to promote greater job satisfaction on the part of the employees. Theory Z states that workers and management should share the decision making in the job environment.

Japan is given credit for the development of the Theory Z psychology. Japan had the reputation of producing poor quality autos which did not stand up in the American market. Japan requested quality control specialists from the United States to teach them how to make better quality automobiles. Shortly before this the Lockheed Aircraft was granted a guaranteed loan from the U.S. Government. One of the provisions of the guaranteed loan was that Lockheed would submit to rigid measures of quality control in the construction of airplanes for their job contracts. Industrial psychologists were contacted and they recommended worker involvement in the development of quality products. The workers became involved in making suggestions in manufacturing which would help turn out a higher quality project. The same industrial

psychologists which advised Lockheed were contacted to consult with Japanese industries to help them build a better quality automobile. The worker involvement concept in Japan was as successful as it was with the Lockheed Corporation.

The Theory Z concept continues to grow in Japan, and the quality of Japanese autos continues to rise. The Japanese workers contribute two hours a week to "Quality Circle" meetings. This presenter had the privilege of seeing the "Quality Circle" groups in operation at the Boeing Aircraft Corporation. The groups took their responsibilities very seriously and have lowered company productions costs, and at the same time helped promote a better quality product. The "Quality Circle" concept could be valuable in small schools in Kansas. It appears reasonable to allow an hour or two each week for students in small schools to become involved with community improvement projects. A more effective school would be the end result if students were permitted to participate in community development activities.

Community development occurs as a result of people working together, and the community improves as a result of people doing things for the common good of all. Pride results from a better community, and an appreciation of the community increases as a result of students having a hand in community development activities. The end results of the community development process not only makes for an improved and efficient community but also makes committed students who are more likely to stay, live, and work in the community.

There are many community development programs in Kansas which are very effective. Civic clubs like the Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, and others are very active and effective in promoting community development. The

Chamber of Commerce, Junior Chamber of Commerce, governmental agencies such as the Cooperative Extension Service are also very active in community development activities. The Cooperative Extension Service sponsors the PRIDE community development program which encourages 4-H club members to be active in community development activities. The 4-H youths are from 8 to 21 years of age, and conduct community development activities as part of the PRIDE program.

Vocational agriculture departments through their Future Farmers of American chapters have a community development program referred at as BOAC which stands for Building Our American Communities. This program has been popular and effective in Kansas schools. A majority of the 160 schools which have vocational agriculture programs in Kansas participate in the BOAC program. The established BOAC program can serve as a model for a community development program in the small schools of Kansas.

Even if there is not an FFA chapter present, each school could still conduct a community development program. A key to success of the BOAC model lies in its ability to arrive at a consensus on the selection of the community development projects. One project is selected for the BOAC program each year. Care is taken to remain positive in the selection of the community development project, and to include the whole community in planning and conducting the program. Every effort is made to involve as many of the community agencies as possible in conducting the chosen project.

A good way of selecting the project is to have each of the students name three things they like about their community, three things they like about other communities, and three things they think could use improvement.

The lists for all of the students are then consolidated and summarized to see which things are liked the most about the community, the three things liked most about other communities, and the three things that are in need of improvements as rated by all of the students who are going to be involved in the community development project. By starting with the positive statements, the group will more likely select a project which will have a high chance of success. Two or three possible community development projects will be selected for further study.

It is now time to appoint committees to begin study and gather information on the possible success of the 2 or 3 projects which were selected. At this time it is important that the committees gather information on the economics, technical, political, social, and moral aspects of the projects. The following questions are helpful in the decision making process. What is the community support for the project? Which agencies want to cooperate in conducting the project? Are influential people interested in helping the youths, and can the economic, technical, social, political, and moral considerations be favorably met insuring a successful community development project?

At this stage it is important that consensus be obtained in identifying the project which has the best chance of successful completion. Consensus indicates that the community agrees with the selection of the project, and will assist with the completion of it.

If the above steps are followed a successful outcome will be assured. The community will be improved and enriched as a result. The individual student will benefit because he or she will have a sense of belonging and achievement. Our schools will benefit because the students will be developing a feeling of pride of ownership in the community, and there will

be a better chance that the students will stay in the community to produce their livelihood, and continue to develop the community through future community development projects. The students and the adults are present in our schools and communities who could plan and conduct community development projects. A youth group or class in the school could be the group which would carry out the community development project supervised by a teacher or other interested adult. The outcome would not only promote community development but better students and better schools would be the end result of the community development process.